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ABSTRACT

This final report describes accomplishments and activities of a four-year federally funded project to provide technical assistance to Colorado children and youth with deafblindness. Accomplishments are detailed for each of the following six project goals: (1) identification of children with deafblindness; (2) development and maintenance of in-state expertise; (3) delivery of technical assistance in a coordinated, friendly manner which supports community involvement; (4) provision of transition services for learners with deafblindness; (5) provision of opportunities for parent networking and support; and (6) maintenance and utilization of input from an advisory committee. Implications of the project are discussed, noting the unique needs of each child with deaf blindness and the inadequacy of general models of intervention to meet these children's highly specialized needs. (DB)

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ED 436 917

COLORADO SERVICES TO CHILDREN WITH DEAFBLINDNESS

Final Performance Report: October 1, 1995 To September 30, 1999

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I. PROJECT INFORMATION

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II. PROJECT SUMMARY

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is the primary educational agency of the State of Colorado with the responsibility for assuring that all children with disabilities between the ages of birth and twenty-one receive a free and appropriate education. The agency applied for and received a four year (1995 - 1999) grant from the United States Department of Education to provide technical assistance to Colorado children and youth with deafblindness.

The Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness Project has six goal areas based on the recommendations of the Colorado Task Force on Deafblindness, an interagency advisory committee to the project, and the approval of the federal granting authority:

(1) Identification of children with deafblindness;

(2) Development and maintenance of in-state expertise;

(3) Delivery of technical assistance in a coordinated, seamless, and user friendly manner which supports community involvement;

(4) Provision of transition services for learners with deafblindness;

(5) Provision of opportunities for parent networking and support; and

(6) Maintenance and utilization of input from an advisory committee (The Colorado Task Force on Deafblindness) to plan, develop, and implement services.

III. PEFORMANCE REPORT

PURPOSE, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The ongoing purpose of the Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness Project is to provide leadership within Colorado to strengthen the educational programs of children and youth (ages birth through 21 years) who are identified or suspected as having both vision and hearing losses. Leadership is demonstrated in three primary areas that include:

(a) organization of a statewide leadership forum known as the Deafblind Task Force;

(b) provision of training and information to personnel working with learners who are deafblind and their families; and

(c) provision of technical assistance to children and youth with deafblindness, their families, and their service providers.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE FOUR YEAR REPORTING CYCLE

The goals and objectives of the project are listed with a corresponding explanation of the work that has been done from October 1, 1995 to September 30, 1999. The page number of the approved goal and objective in the original grant proposal is noted for the reader's reference.

There are three staff persons involved in the Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness Project. Tanni Anthony is the Project Director, Sheryl Ayres is the Program Coordinator, and Kim Samuels is the support staff person. Ms. Anthony has been with the project since 1992. Seventy percent of Ms. Anthony's time was dedicated to the project during its four-year cycle. She also served in the role as the State Consultant on Visual Impairments. Ms. Anthony is a certified teacher of students with visual impairments and an orientation and mobility instructor. Ms. Ayres was hired on a .6 FTE basis in early September 1998. She is a certified teacher of students with visual impairments and an orientation and mobility instructor. Prior to September 1998, the position of Program Coordinator had been filled, at different time periods, by two other people; Kathryn Daniels and Jacki Daniels. Both Ms. Anthony and Ms. Ayres have extensive training in the area of teaching learners who are deafblind. Ms. Samuels contributed .5 FTE to the project. She has been with the project since November of 1999. These individuals will be referenced by title and/or name throughout the summary of project accomplishments.

Key activities that have supported the project goals and objectives during the time period of October 1, 1995 through September 30, 1999 are as follow:

1. Identify Children With Deafblindness.

1.1 Develop Materials and Procedures for Publicizing Project

1.1a Distribute project brochure (English and Spanish versions) (page 29)

The project brochures have been distributed to parents and service providers who contact the project staff for more information about the services of the project. The brochures have also been disseminated at training events (e.g., CAER Conferences, Deaf Symposiums, State Conferences on Visual Impairment, Summer Institutes on Deafblindness, etc.).

1.1b Distribute project newsletter (entitled "VIBRATIONS") (page 29)

The project has a newsletter entitled *VIBRATIONS*. The newsletter has a mailing list of approximately 600 individuals including parents, service providers, and administrators. It is also mailed to the 307.11 project staff across the country. The newsletter provides a calendar of events, summary articles on pertinent topics (e.g., Usher syndrome, report of the census, communication strategies), resource information, review of new items in the project's library, and discussion of key events in Colorado and across the country.

The newsletter is mailed three times during a given school year. There is an Autumn, Winter, and Spring edition. There were 12 newsletters mailed out during the four-year grant cycle.

1.1c Attend meetings of both regular and special education forums (page 29)

The Project Director attended the State Special Education Directors Meetings that occur each given school year. In total, there were three meetings a year. She is also the special education liaison to the Colorado Department of Education's West Central Regional Team. This team meets monthly.

The Project Director was involved with ongoing meetings concerning licensure of Colorado teachers. She is the chair of a sub-committee that addresses teacher-training competencies for personnel serving children with visual impairments, including deafblindness.

The Project Director met with the staff of Anchor Center for Blind Children and the Colorado Home Intervention Project; both agencies receive funding from Colorado's 307.11 project to provide technical assistance to infants and toddlers with deafblindness.

The Project Director attended several regional meetings of the vision service providers in the past year. The southern and northern region meet monthly; the metro region meets quarterly, and the western region meets one to two times a year.

The Project Director met with the Deaf Core Team on several occasions. This group is comprised of university faculty, the CDE State Consultant on Deafness, regional teacher representatives, audiologists, and parent group representatives.

In September of 1997, an Advisory Committee was developed for the Colorado School for the Blind. The Project Director was invited to be a member. The purpose of the forum was to further define the outreach activities of CSDB. The group has encouraged the Project Director to bring statewide service and support needs of individuals with deafblindness to this forum. The group has met six times since its inception.

The Project Director is also a member of the Vision Coalition, which is comprised of representatives from the University of Northern Colorado, Colorado State School for the Deaf and the Blind, and Colorado chapter of AERBVI. Teacher and parent representatives were added to the Vision Coalition during the 1998-99 school year. The group met three to four times a year during the grant cycle.

1.1d Use electronic mail systems. (page 29)

The project has regular access to electronic mail systems. All project staff have e-mail and access to Internet. The Project Director and Project Coordinator have subscribed to pertinent listservs in the field of education (deafblind, AERNET, etc.).

1.1e Present at conferences and/or prepare information booth materials. (page 29).

From October 1, 1995 to September 30, 1999, the project staff has been involved with the following statewide, national, and international professional presentations:

- In early May of 1996, the Project Director attended the International Conference on Deafblindness held in Vancouver, British Columbia. A co-presentation entitled "Transdisciplinary Play-Based Assessment in the Early Years of the Child with Deafblindness: Evaluating Communication and O&M Skills" was given on May 10 by Tanni Anthony, J. Greeley, and Debbie Gleason. J. Greeley is one of the consultants with the Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness. Debbie Gleason is from the Perkins School for the Blind.

- Tanni Anthony gave two presentations at the Early Childhood Educators of British Columbia Conference, which was held simultaneously in Vancouver to the International Conference on Deafblindness (May 1996). One presentation specifically addressed learners who are deafblind; "The Colorado Hilton Perkins Project" presentation reviewed assessment procedures for young children with both vision and hearing loss.

- Tanni Anthony attended the International Mobility Conference 8 in Tronheim, Norway in May of 1996. This conference was funded personally by Ms. Anthony. While she was at the conference, she gave two presentations on the topic of Orientation and Mobility, one of which addressed learners with deafblindness.

- Tanni Anthony gave a full day inservice on the topic of "Cortical Visual Impairment" on October 4, 1996. Approximately 50 local service providers and parents attended the training, which was held in the southwest region of the state.

- Tanni Anthony gave a presentation entitled "Early Warning Signs of Vision Problems" at the Fourth Annual Paraprofessional Conference in Denver on October 19, 1996.

- Tanni Anthony gave a full morning inservice on "Behavior as Communication" to approximately 100 paraprofessionals, teachers, and therapists on October 25, 1996. Attendees were employed by Margaret Walters School or Robert Weiland School. These two schools have the largest concentration of learners with deafblindness in Colorado enrolled in their programs.

- A co-presentation on the topic of "Cortical Visual Impairment" was given to teachers, paraprofessionals, and parents of Academy School District in Colorado Springs on December 9, 1996. The three co-presenters included Jan Barron, Judy Mumford, and Tanni Anthony. Ms. Barron and Ms. Mumford are teachers of students with visual impairments in Academy School District. The workshop was attended by approximately 25 persons.

- Tanni Anthony and Judy Mumford, a Colorado teacher of children with visual impairment and Orientation and Mobility specialist, gave a co-presentation on "Literacy Plans for Learners with Visual Impairment: A Team Approach" on February 15 1997 at the Courage to Risk Conference held in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The presentation covered Literacy Plan development for learners with visual impairment, including those who have both a vision and hearing loss.

- On April 5, 1997, the Project Director and J. C. Greeley (Colorado Task Force on Deafblindness member and project consultant) gave a co-presentation on assessment strategies for learners with multiple disabilities including deafblindness. The presentation was given at the Colorado AER Annual Conference held in Fort Collins, Colorado.

- The Project Director made a joint presentation entitled "Usher Syndrome: A Review" with Laura Douglas, the State Consultant on Deafness, on June 15, 1997. The presentation was made at the Educational Audiology Conference held in Estes Park, Colorado.

- A presentation was made at the SKI*HI Regional Conference in Ogden, Utah on July 31, 1997 by the Project Director. The title of the presentation was "Sensory Building Blocks: Using an Individual Learning Style Approach."

- A presentation on cortical visual impairment was given to over 30 staff members of Colorado Springs School District 11 on the topic of cortical visual impairment. The inservice occurred on September 24, 1997.

- The project staff gave a presentation on young children with deafblindness to the early childhood staff of Margaret Walters School on December 4, 1997. Margaret Walters School has 11 identified students with deafblindness.

- An inservice training on cortical visual impairment was made to the Robert Weiland School staff on January 5, 1998. The entire school staff, approximately 100 people, were in attendance. Robert Weiland School has seven identified students with deafblindness.

- Tanni Anthony and Sharon Prairie, one of the project's contract staff, gave a presentation on "Communication Strategies for the Child with Multiple Disabilities, Including Deafblindness" at the CAER Conference on April 4, 1998.

- The Project Director was involved with two co-presentations at the National Conference on Deafblindness held in Washington, DC in June of 1998. The first presentation was co-presented with J. C. Greeley on "From the NICU to Home Programming: The Infant Who Has Vision and Hearing Loss." The second presentation involved a panel discussion on Part H (now Part C) services. A Colorado parent, Marie Lopez, was a member of the panel discussion.

- The Project Director was the guest speaker of the Nevada 307.11 Project on May 19, 1997. A daylong presentation was made on "The Young Child with Sensory Loss."

- Tanni Anthony gave a presentation on "Cortical Visual Impairment and Central Auditory Processing Disorder" at the OSEP Project Director's Meeting that was held in Arlington, Virginia on October 26, 1998.

- Tanni Anthony gave a presentation on "National Vision Screening" at the AAHBEI Conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee on July 13, 1998.

- Sheryl Ayres presented on "Behavioral Issues of Children with Deafblindness" at the Colorado Affective Needs Conference that was held in Denver, Colorado on January 15, 1999.

- Sheryl Ayres gave a presentation on "Communication and Literacy Modality Plans" to parents at the Family Learning Seminar in Colorado Springs, Colorado on June 5, 1999.

- "Cortical Visual Impairment: From Diagnosis to Programming" was the topic of a full day training in Norman, Oklahoma. Tanni Anthony was invited to give this presentation by the Oklahoma Deaf-Blind Technical Assistance Project on September 21, 1999.

- Tanni Anthony gave a full day presentation on "Orientation and Mobility: The Infant/Toddler Year." She was the guest of the Nevada Dual Sensory Project on May 4, 1999.

- Information on the Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness Project was displayed at the April 1997 CAER Conference, the October 1995-99 Deaf Symposium, and October 1995-99 State Conference on Visual Impairment.

1.1f Develop and distribute Colorado Project posters (in both English and Spanish) (page 29)

The Colorado Deafblind Task Force has just finished project posters pertinent to vision screening and hearing screening awareness. The posters are in the process of being printed. They will be disseminated to eye care specialists, audiologists, and other interested parties over the course of the 99-00 school year.

1.2 Coordinate With Other State Child Count and Child Find Activities.

1.2a Meet with appropriate personnel of Part B and Part H Child Count process (page 30)

The Part C and B staff are also housed at the Colorado Department of Education. The Project Director met with appropriate Part B and Part C staff persons on a periodic basis during all four fiscal years of the project. The Early Childhood staff at the Colorado Department of Education are excellent about contacting project staff as issues arise pertaining to young children with sensory impairments. The Project Director is invited to all Early Childhood Initiative meetings. Time constraints, however, have limited regular attendance.

1.2b Provide technical assistance to Child Find staff about deafblindness. (page 30)

Information has been mailed to Child Find staff through the project newsletter and specific correspondence concerning the Colorado Deafblind Census. If specific technical assistance has been requested, project staff have followed through on this request.

Child Find staff are the target of a pilot project on infant-toddler vision screening (see objective for 1.4 for further information).

1.2c Coordinate referral information with other key agencies that might be the first point of contact to a family. (page 30)

Referral information has been coordinated on an individual basis with agencies such as the Anchor Center for Blind Children, the Colorado Home Intervention Program, the Helen Keller National Center's Rocky Mountain Regional office, and the school districts who have had a new student with deafblindness.

1.3 Provide a Standardized Process for Referral to the Project.

1.3a Develop a standardized documentation system for collecting referral information. (page 30)

Several forms were developed in fiscal year 1997 for the purpose of collecting new referral data. One is a Request for Technical Assistance (TA) Form and one is a Log Record Form. When a child is referred to the program, a census and TA form is mailed back to the person making the referral. The Program Coordinator contacts the referral party to ensure that all questions are answered and that an appropriate referral is made in a timely manner.

A computer database program has been used for collecting referral information. As new referrals come in, this information is entered into the database.

1.3b Conduct an annual mailing to appropriate agencies and personnel addressing the referral procedures. (page 30)

Agencies contacted regarding the Colorado Deafblind Census and services from the Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness Project included the Child Find personnel in each district, school districts, Colorado Home Intervention Program, Anchor Center for the Blind, Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, and Helen Keller National Center's Rocky Mountain Regional office.

Key individuals contacted within these agencies include: Special Education Directors, other administrators, teachers of children with visual impairments, teachers of children who are deaf/hard of hearing, early childhood personnel, and audiologists.

1.3c Use the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), as possible, as the single point of contact for families and service providers. (page 30)

The project staff have continued to work diligently to establish CDE as the single point of contact for families and service providers. Teachers and administrators across the state typically call CDE when a new learner with deafblindness has been identified. Information has been shared in the newsletter and the correspondence relating to the census on the project's role with children and youth that are identified as being deafblind.

1.4 Develop And Disseminate Information On Effective Practices Of Vision And Hearing Screening

1.4a Meet with state personnel associated with existing vision and hearing screening guidelines. (page 31)

The Project Director has been actively involved in a Pilot Universal Vision Screening Project for children ages 6 to 36 months. This project began in January of 1997 and is sponsored through the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment. The project coordinator is Dr. Paula Hudson, who is a member of the Colorado Task Force on Deafblindness. Another key member on the screening project is J. C. Greeley, Program Director of the Anchor Center for Blind Children, who is also a member of the Colorado Task Force on Deafblindness. A manual has been developed for the project. Currently there are four sites involved in the pilot study.

Karen Connor (State Consultant on School Nursing) and Dr. Cheryl Johnson (State Consultant on Audiology and Deafness) are on the Usher Identification Project. Both individuals have mailed a survey to Child Find personnel to better decipher vision and hearing practices for children ages birth through five. The survey will drive next step training in the state.

Dr. Cheryl Johnson organized a task force to address hearing screening standards. She kept the Project Director apprised of her efforts on this topic.

1.4b Modify, with collaboration, existing guidelines to better encompass the needs of very young children and/or children with disabilities. (page 31)

The Project Director has been involved in designing the procedures manual and vision screening protocol of the Colorado Department of Health vision screening pilot project. The screening protocol is an adapted version of one that the Project Director co-developed while she worked in Alaska.

In addition to the Pilot Universal Vision Screening Project, the project staff have been actively involved in refining vision screening procedures for children with hearing loss. Ms. Connor is in the process of amending statewide paperwork addressing vision screening practices for students, ages three to 21 years. The changes include broader practices for students who are hearing impaired and/or with additional disabilities.

1.4c Provide statewide inservice training to pertinent personnel conducting vision and hearing screening procedures. (Page 31)

The Project Director and J. C. Greeley completed the first training on infant/toddler vision screening in Durango on February 26, 1998. Participants included Department of Health nurses, Child Find personnel, early childhood personnel, and administrators. The Project Director and Dr. Paula Hudson did training on April 1998 for the second pilot site (Boulder County). Since this time, Dr. Hudson has set up two additional pilot sites. Information will be gathered from the pilot sites to refine the protocol and screening procedures. The intention is to expand the infant/toddler vision screening model to all areas of Colorado using the Department of Health regional offices.

1.5 Complete the Required Annual Census in A Timely And Efficient Manner

1.5a Disseminate the census information packets to appropriate personnel. (Page 31)

Information packets were mailed in December of 1995-98 to contact persons across the state, including local community center board programs. The packet contained a letter of introduction and an explanation of the census process, census forms, and handouts detailing the definition of deafblindness and the high-risk populations associated with deafblindness.

A condensed packet was mailed to each contact site that had already registered learners with deafblindness. This packet consisted of a cover letter and the prepared census forms for the identified students at that site. The contact person was asked to review and update the information on the forms.

The census form was modified for the 1998 Census Count. The new form required a significant overhaul of the internal database program, as several new fields were added based on a new protocol developed by the National Technical Assistance Consortium (NTAC).

1.5b Coordinate incoming data with the CDE Child Count Data Coordinator. (Page 31)

The Project Director met with the CDE Child Count Data Coordinator on several occasions each fiscal year to coordinate the data from the December 1 Count and the Colorado Deafblind Census Count. Since the December 1 Count information is mailed into the federal government at the end of January, there is room for marginal error between the two counts as Deafblind Count information is still coming into CDE from some sites. The other reason for discrepancy is that the December 1 Count does not include the infants and toddlers counted on the Colorado Deafblind Count. The two counts are coordinated at about a 95% capacity.

At the present, 112 Colorado children and youth have been identified as having both vision and hearing loss.

1.5c Submit data to NTAC (formerly TRACES) (page 31)

The data for the FY 96-99 Counts were tallied and sent into the federal government in a timely manner.

2. Develop And Maintain In-State Expertise.

2.1 Establish a System of Ongoing Inservice Training for Families and Service Providers of Children and Youth with Deafblindness.

2.1a *Identify an array of professionals across the State of Colorado who are trained to work with children and youth with deafblindness and their families.* (Page 32)

Colorado was highly fortunate to have a Hilton Perkins grant from September 1991 to December 1994. During this period of time, several professionals were provided extensive training on working with learners who are deafblind. Several of these individuals have since been available on a contract basis with the Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness Project.

In addition to the contract consultants, the Colorado project has offered seven consecutive Summer Institutes on Deafblindness (1993-1999). These trainings have provided invaluable inservice opportunities to well over 140 different service providers across Colorado. There has been a core group of about 20 individuals who have attended all seven summer institutes.

2.1b *Identify service providers presently working with children and youth with deafblindness.* (Page 32)

In prior grant cycles, the project did not collect information on the service providers of the identified children and youth who are deafblind. The 1996 Census was modified to request this information on each child. As a result, the classroom teacher is identified on each child identified on the census. The teachers' names are now included on the project's newsletter mailing list. Several classroom teachers participated it the 1997-99 Summer Institutes on Deafblindness.

Other identified personnel include the audiologists, teachers of children with visual impairments, teachers of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, and motor specialists. The latter group now has a list of 450 individuals across the state. Not all of these providers have a student who is deafblind, but there is a mechanism to provide awareness information.

2.1c *Identify training needs of families and service providers through completion of an annual Needs Assessment.* (Page 32)

A Needs Assessment was mailed to families of children on the Colorado Deafblind Census in March 1997, March 1998 and August of 1999. The Needs Assessment tool has been modified over time by each new Program Coordinator. The data from the Needs Assessment has been used to design the Summer Family retreat.

Since the Fall of 1997, a technical assistance request form that details over 20 areas of need for an individual student has been included in the project's newsletter. The newsletter is mailed to parents and service providers across the state. As these forms have come into the project office, the areas of need have been noted as significant for further parent and teacher training.

The technical assistance form was also mailed to parents in the beginning of each school year with a cover letter inviting them to let the project know about their training and support needs.

2.1d Identify priority competencies needed to work with learners with deafblindness. (Page 32)

The Project Director contributed to the "Opportunities for Success" document developed by the Colorado Department of Education in fiscal year 1996. The document reviewed competencies needed by learners with special needs BEFORE the learner could be ready to address academic standards. Tanni Anthony worked on competencies for learners with deafblindness. This information was shared across the state over the course of fiscal year 1996 and 1997.

The Project Director was involved with two other federal projects during fiscal year 1997. The SIT-UPS Project in the State of Washington and the Model Demonstration Project in the State of California both addressed competencies for service providers who work with young children with deafblindness. The Project Director co-authored a listing of competency areas for the Washington project. This information has been used in Colorado. The Project Director was also involved with the Utah State School for the Blind staff, who drafted early childhood competencies for professionals working with young children with sensory loss (including deafblindness).

The Project Director completed a questionnaire designed by Dr. Barbara McLetchie and Marianne Riggio in fiscal year 1997 on teacher competencies specific to working with learners with deafblindness. Dr. McLetchie and Ms. Riggio have since disseminated their National Competencies document. This information has been shared with the University of Northern Colorado personnel associated with the teacher training programs in blindness and deafness.

The Project Director has been a member of a steering committee on statewide licensure since 1997. Competencies specific to deafblindness have been infused in the models for the teaching training programs on Severe Needs: Vision and Severe Needs: Hearing. Both of these programs are with the University of Northern Colorado.

2.1e Identify regional and national professionals and agencies that can assist with training. (Page 32)

The project has received ongoing information from DB-Link, NTAC, and the Helen Keller National Center. This information often addressed other agencies and personnel associated with training. In addition, information has been solicited from other 307.11 project staff and the Hilton Perkins staff to determine key personnel to present at the Colorado Summer Institutes.

2.If *Conduct inservice training, including one annual summer institute that is coordinated with Colorado's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Plan and with other states in the Western Region.* (Page 32)

- The Colorado Deafblind Project sponsored Dr. Jim Jan from British Columbia to present at the April 18-20, 1996 Mountains Visions Conference that was held in Vail. Dr. Jan provided three presentations: (a) "Oculomotor Disorders;" (b) "The Neurology of the Visual System;" and (c) "A Question/Answer Forum" on sleep disorders, cortical visual impairment, and other topics of Interest.

- A seven-site satellite training was offered on May 4, 1996 on the topic of "Communication Strategies for the Learner with Deafblindness." This training was co-sponsored with the Front Range Community College's Interpreter Training Project and the Paraprofessional Certificate Program, and the Helen Keller National Center. The target audience included parents, interpreters, paraprofessionals, and other professionals. Maureen McGowan from the Rocky Mountain Region office of Helen Keller National Center was the principal presenter of this training. In May of 1996, Maureen McGowan from the Rocky Mountain Regional office of Helen Keller National Center provided statewide teleconference training on the topic of "Communication Strategies for the Person Who is Deafblind."

- Three Colorado service providers were sent to a regional training in San Diego in July of 1996. The training was sponsored by the Perkins National Project. Two of the participants received funding support from the Perkins Project. The third person was financially supported by the Colorado Deafblind Project. The course topic was "Strategies for Inclusion." Two of the participants wrote a newsletter article on the topic of inclusion for the project's newsletter. One provided an inservice for the staff of the Anchor Center for Blind Children as a follow-up training activity.

- The Summer 1996 Institute was a great success. It was held in Winter Park, Colorado on August 5-7, 1996. Jim Durkel from the Texas 307.11 Project presented on "Communication Systems: Factoring Development and Sensory Capabilities." Over 40 persons (all service providers) participated in the training.

- Tanni Anthony gave a full day inservice on the topic of "Cortical Visual Impairment" on October 4, 1996. The inservice was attended by approximately 50 local service providers and parents.

- A presentation entitled "Early Warning Signs of Vision Problems" was given at the Fourth Annual Paraprofessional Conference in Denver on October 19, 1996 by Tanni Anthony.

- The Project Director gave a full morning inservice on "Behavior as Communication" to approximately 100 paraprofessionals, teachers, and therapists on October 25, 1996. These persons in attendance were employed by Margaret Walters School or Robert

Weiland School. These two schools have the largest concentration of learners with deafblindness in Colorado enrolled in their programs.

- A co-presentation on the topic of "Cortical Visual Impairment" was given to teachers, paraprofessionals, and parents of Academy School District in Colorado Springs on December 9, 1996. The three co-presenters included Jan Barron, Judy Mumford, and Tanni Anthony. Ms. Barron and Ms. Mumford are teachers of students with visual impairments in Academy School District. Approximately 25 persons attended the workshop.

- The Project Director taught a four-session distance delivery course on "Working with Young Children with Multiple Disabilities, Including Sensory Loss" over the months of January and February 1997. The course was designed specifically for paraprofessionals. Over 25 people were enrolled in the course, which was delivered to four sites: Denver, Grand Junction, Fort Morgan, and Lamar. It was offered for one credit through the Front Range Community College.

- Tanni Anthony and Judy Mumford, a Colorado teacher of children with visual impairment and Orientation and Mobility specialist, gave a co-presentation on "Literacy Plans for Learners with Visual Impairment: A Team Approach" on February 15, 1997 at the Courage to Risk Conference held in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The presentation covered Literacy Plan development for learners with visual impairment, including those who have both a vision and hearing loss.

- Kathy McNulty from NTAC provided a two-day training on the topic of "Personal Futures Planning" on February 21 and 22, 1997. The training was held in Denver and co-sponsored by the Helen Keller National Center and NTAC. Participants included parents and service providers. Several members of the Colorado Deafblind Task Force attended the training. Agencies represented included: CDE, Colorado Department of Health, Anchor Center for Blind Children, Colorado Rehabilitation Services, Social Security Administration, the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, and three Colorado school districts.

- On April 5, 1997 the Project Director and J. C. Greeley (Colorado Task Force on Deafblindness member) gave a co-presentation on assessment strategies for learners with multiple disabilities, including deafblindness. The presentation was given at the Colorado AER Annual Conference held in Fort Collins, Colorado.

- The Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness Project sponsored Beth Fishman to present at the April 1997 CAER Conference. Ms. Fishman gave a presentation to over 60 participants on the topic of "Sensory Integration Therapy."

- The Project Director worked with the 307.11 Coordinator in Wyoming (and five other Western Region states) to sponsor a June 21-22, 1997 training in Jackson Hole featuring Dr. Jan van Dijk. Five Colorado participants attended this regional training.

The selected participants included Tanni Anthony, Pat Lewis, Wendy Stoltman Findlay, Cynthia Stevens, and Sharon Prairie.

- Patty Kenyon, a contract consultant, gave four separate presentations on behalf of the grant project. Her topics included, "Motor Development for Learners with Sensory Loss;" "Computer Considerations for People with Visual Deficits;" "Sensory Loss and Head Injuries: Common Problems;" and "Assistive Technology for Persons with Sensory Loss." The four presentations were given to motor therapists at Children's Hospital and a hospital in Fort Collins between April and October 1997.

- The 1997 Summer Institute on Deafblindness was held on August 4-6, 1997. The presenter was Dr. Dixie Mercer from the Texas School for the Blind. Dr. Mercer spoke on "Educational Programming to Meet the Sensory Needs of Students with Multiple Disabilities."

- The project, with the assistance of Colorado 6B funds, sponsored Dr. Sandra Davenport to provide a daylong training on "Usher Syndrome: Building Systems of Support." The training was offered in Denver on November 14, 1997. Forty-two people attended the training.

- The project staff gave a presentation on young children with deafblindness to the early childhood staff of Margaret Walters School on December 4, 1997. Margaret Walters School has 11 identified students with deafblindness.

- An inservice training on cortical visual impairment was made to the Robert Weiland School staff on January 5, 1998. The entire school staff, approximately 100 people, were in attendance. Robert Weiland School has seven identified students with deafblindness.

- The Project Director and Sharon Prairie, one of the project's contract staff, gave a presentation on "Communication Strategies for the Child with Multiple Disabilities, Including Deafblindness" at the CAER Conference on April 4, 1998.

- "Using Observation Tools to Design Effective Instruction for Students with Deafblindness" was the topic of the 1998 Summer Institute on Deafblindness, which was held on August 3-5, 1998 in Winter Park, Colorado. Presenters were Robbie Blaha and Millie Smith from the Texas School for the Blind. Forty-two persons attended the training.

- "Literacy for All: Building Communication Systems for Learners with Visual Impairment and Multiple Disabilities" was the theme of the Colorado State Conference on Visual Impairment on October 29-31, 1998. The project funded Dr. Mary Morse's presentation on "Communication Strategies for Students with Visual Impairment and Multiple Disabilities."

- The topic of the 1999 Summer Institute on Deafblindness was "SEE/HEAR: Assessment and Program Strategies to Enhance the Sensory Learning of Students with Deafblindness." The workshop was held in Breckenridge, Colorado on August 12-4, 1999. Presenters included all Colorado personnel: Tanni Anthony, Judy Mumford, Jim Olson, Wendy Stoltman Findlay (all teachers of students with visual impairment) and Dr. Cheryl Johnson (State Consultant on Audiology and Deafness).

2.1g Provide follow-up technical assistance to training events to ensure supported application of information to a child specific setting. (Page 32)

Participants from key training and technical assistance events were added to the newsletter mailing list. The TA Request Form is in each of the newsletters. In addition, a letter of follow-up was sent to each participant of the 1997 and 1998 Summer Institutes on Deafblindness and the Usher Syndrome training. The letters invited specific follow-up support to parents and service providers.

2.2 Support Colorado Preservice Special Education Teacher Training Programs in the Area of Information Pertinent to Deafblindness

2.2a Identify all special education personnel preparation programs in Colorado. (Page 33)

The Colorado teacher training programs have been identified. Only two deal specifically with blindness and deafness. Both are at the University of Northern Colorado (UNC). The University of Northern Colorado and the University of Colorado at Denver (UCD) have teacher training programs specific to working with students who have significant support needs. The other Colorado universities that have special education teacher training programs focus on emotional disturbance and mild/moderate needs.

2.2b Determine course content specific to sensory impairment in the special education teacher training programs in Colorado. (Page 33)

The Project Director was on the Advisory Committee of a University of Northern Colorado federal project whose mission was to conduct course work specific to learners with multiple disabilities, including sensory loss. Input was given to appropriate university personnel in fiscal year 1996 concerning proposed course content. The grant has since finished and the university has begun to implement its coursework, which does have deafblind specific content.

The Project Director was asked to speak at a methodology course in the personnel preparation program on deafness. The request came from Dr. John Luckner at the University of Northern Colorado. The presentation was given on April 15, 1998.

The Project Director gave a presentation on July 8, 1999 at the University of Northern Colorado. The topic was on early intervention with children who have visual impairment

and/or deafblindness. The participants were teachers in training in the Severe Needs: Visual Impairment program.

2.2c Develop a module of basic information related to the needs of learners who are deafblind. (Page 33)

A packet of baseline information on deafblindness has been developed. The project has a library of handouts on a variety of topics pertinent to deafblindness. The "baseline packet" is comprised of several of the handouts in this collection, many of which include the Fact Sheets developed by DB-Link and Colorado 307.11 Project Fact Sheets (32 in total).

2.2d Disseminate the module to all personnel preparation institutions in Colorado. (Page 37)

The baseline packets have been sent to three UNC programs and the UCD program with a cover letter that offered further information and/or training assistance. This information was mailed in March 1998.

2.2e Assist higher education institutions by formulating and disseminating a database of speakers available to present on issues related to deafblindness. (Page 33)

Information about possible presenters was included in the cover letter that accompanied the baseline packet of information mailed in March of 1998.

3. Deliver Technical Assistance in A Coordinated, Seamless, And User Friendly Manner That Supports Community Involvement.

3.1 Develop an Ongoing Formal Needs Assessment Process to Determine and Monitor Needs.

3.1a Examine and, as needed, modify the Needs Assessment tools to ensure that they are culturally appropriate. (Page 34)

Kathryn Daniels, a prior staff member, took the lead role in adapting the project's Parent Needs Assessment for the March 1997. It was then adapted by Jacki Daniels for the 1998 mailing as it was felt that the form was too overwhelming as evidenced by a low return on the fiscal year 1997 Parents Need Survey. A further revised version was designed by Sheryl Ayres and mailed in August of 1999.

3.1b Ensure that the Needs Assessment tools are available in a variety of languages and formats to ensure accessibility to all families and service providers. (Page 34)

The current tool is available in English and Spanish.

3.1c Conduct an annual Needs Survey mailing to families and service providers. (Page 34)

Parents were mailed a Technical Assistance Request Form in the fall of 1997 and 1998. This form serves as a request for personal inservice or information request. Ten parents responded back with requests for technical assistance during fiscal year 1998 and 14 responded back during fiscal year 1999.

A Parent Needs Survey was mailed in March of 1997, March of 1998, and August of 1999. The March 1998 survey was accompanied with the Fact Sheet which describes the Colorado 307.11 project and a letter from Yvette Tanner inviting parents to be involved with the National Family Association of Deafblindness.

3.1d Disseminate the results of the Needs Surveys in the project newsletter.

The tallied results of each of the Parent Needs Surveys were reported in the project's newsletter. Parents who responded to the survey received follow-up phone calls and/or correspondence from the Project Coordinator.

3.1e Incorporate the identified needs into ongoing training and technical assistance work with families and service providers. (Page 34)

In some instances, the project staff scheduled inservice training events to reflect the Needs Assessment results. This was the case specific to the topic on cortical visual impairment. The project newsletter has also featured articles on topics of high technical assistance interest to families and service providers. Articles specific to communication were in the Fall 1997 and Spring 1998 newsletter following parent feedback for more information on this topic. Topics of high interest were used to plan presentations at the annual Family Retreats.

3.2 Provide Consultation Services To Personnel Working With Learners With Deafblindness In Early Intervention Programs, LEAs, And Other Agencies.

3.2a Inform families and service providers of the specific topics commonly associated with technical assistance (e.g., assessment tools and procedures, sign language, communication systems, etc.) (Page 35)

A Technical Assistance Request Form was included in the Spring 1997 – Fall 1999 project newsletters which were mailed to parents, administrators, and service providers across the State of Colorado.

The Project Director is also the editor of "What's Happening Out There," a monthly newsletter to personnel working with learners with visual impairments. Technical assistance information has been included in the newsletters to date, along with printed accolades to the teachers who have requested assistance thus far.

The Colorado Technical Assistance Form has been very successful. Its debut was in the Fall of 1996. The form was refined during the summer of 1996 following a meeting with several of the project's contract consultants. The consultants gave their feedback about the form after its initial trial period. The amended form offers more choices on topics of potential technical assistance and a better variety of how technical assistance can be offered. The technical assistance request form lists the following topics: (a) auditory training; (b) assessment assistance; (c) behavior management; (d) communication system development; (e) daily living skills; (f) inclusion into school program; (g) literacy mode determination; (h) medical issues; (i) orientation and mobility; (j) organizing a daily routine; (k) Personal Futures Planning; (l) sensory skill development, (m) social-emotional concerns, (n) transition form program to program; (o) transition form public school into adult services; (p) vocational training; and (q) "other."

Prior to August of 1996, there was not a good system of recording the collective number of technical assistance requests. It is estimated that from October 1, 1995 to August 1996, there were about ten requests. From August 1996 to March 15, 1997 about 30 separate technical assistance requests were received from parents and teachers. This was far greater than any other year of the project. In fact it is triple the number of requests that came in prior to the development of the TA Request Form!

From March 15, 1997 to February 15, 1998 about 24 separate technical assistance requests were received from parents and teachers. From February 16, 1998 to September 30, 1999 about 48 technical assistance requests were made from parents and teachers.

3.2b *Inform families and service providers of the range of technical assistance services of the project (e.g., group trainings using distance learning, on-site consultation and inservice training, summer institutes, weekend retreats, etc.)* (Page 35)

The Technical Assistance Form includes a column for the type of technical assistance available through the project. Choices include (a) inservice; (b) home visit; (c) school visit; and (d) "other."

The revised Parent Needs Survey has options for parents to receive information and support from the project. The listed options include a statewide parent workshop, family weekend, videotapes, mailed written information, and/or follow-up phone call.

3.2c *Provide technical assistance that is reflective of adult learning theories, family-centered practices, cultural sensitivity; and effective educational strategies.* (Page 35)

The trainings provided during the grant cycle were designed to meet the learning needs of adults. Attention was specifically given to how the information was taught. Hand-on experiences supplemented the lecture activity. For example, participants participated in creating several "maps" as a part of the training on Personal Futures Planning. During Dr. Sandra Davenport's training on Usher syndrome, participants were treated to a simulated experience that included lunch and a light/dark adaptation activity.

The technical assistance provided to families has also heeded best practices in teaching. The consultants have worked with the contact people (parents and/or service providers) to determine "what is needed and wanted" before the actual site visit. Parent permission has been received prior to the consultation visit. This permission form is housed in the child's file in the project office. The consultants have worked hard to include parents in the technical assistance process that occurs within the school setting. Reports are written with parents in mind.

3.2d Disseminate information pertaining to the project's lending library to families and service providers. (Page 35)

Newly acquired materials in the project's library were posted in the newsletters that have been mailed out between Spring of 1997 and the Spring of 1999 editions. This has been an excellent way to broadcast the lending availability of the materials. Over the course of the last four years, there have been about 100 transactions of lending library materials. The number of lending requests has increased each year as the project adds more items and employs better ways of advertising the library's content.

Jacki Daniels did a masterful job of initially organizing the Lending Library. She systematized the library and revised the inventory listing during her employment with the project. Sheryl Ayres has continued the work, revising the inventory listing and extensively adding to the collection. The inventory listing was updated in August of 1999. It was mailed out to families and service providers in April of 1998 and again in September of 1999.

3.3 Develop a Process for Technical Assistance Delivery that Includes a Written Action Plan with Follow-Up and Evaluation Strategies.

3.3a Provide a written plan of the services to be offered through technical assistance that includes timelines for onset and completion; identified personnel and resources to be used; and proposed follow-up procedures. (Page 36)

Within one to two weeks of a request for technical assistance, the information is copied and shared with the consultant who has been identified to complete the assignment (if it will not be completed by one of the two project staff members). In most recent cases, the technical assistance request is completed by the Project Coordinator.

In the event that a contract person is used, a letter is sent to the consultant that details the persons involved, the technical assistance needs, and the requested timeline for completion. A copy of this letter is housed in the child's file. A letter is also sent to the person making the technical assistance request. It details the contract consultant information. The parent permission form is either sent directly to the parents or to the TA Request contact person. If the latter is done, the contact person is asked to contact the parent to sign the form. This is done in instances where the project does not personally know the family. The actual arrangements of the technical assistance visit are made between the requester of the TA and the project's contract person. The contract

consultants keep the Project Coordinator informed of the timelines that have been arranged with the service providers and/or family.

3.3b Ensure that the objectives of the technical assistance are aligned with both child and family centered practices. (Page 36)

Project staff discuss the technical assistance with both parties; with the site personnel requesting the assistance and with the consultant who has been selected to provide the assistance. Specific needs are communicated to the consultant.

Each contract consultant used by the Colorado 307.11 Project has had training in consulting skills, family-centered practices, and strategies for learners with deafblindness.

3.4 Promote the Inclusion of Children and Youth with Deafblindness into Community Programs.

3.4a Identify community persons and resource to collaboratively build a program for each learner with deafblindness. (Page 36)

All technical assistance requests are coordinated with a key contact person on-site. A team approach is highly encouraged with the family and local service providers within the community. The contract consultant asks for the involvement of the whole team. Typically, the team members meet following an observation session in order to learn about the consultant's observations and recommendations for the child's program.

3.4b Include community personnel in all activities of the project's technical assistance. (Page 36)

The project person completing the TA always requests the assistance of identified professionals within the community. For example, if a Functional Vision Assessment is requested, the project staff works with the local teacher of students with visual impairments to complete the assessment. The first step is to determine whether the program has access to a local vision service provider. If so, arrangements are made to discuss whether this individual is in need of assistance in completing a functional vision assessment on the identified child. The project staff would work with this teacher on completing this task. There have been times when the teacher of children with visual impairments has requested the assistance of the project and other times when he or she feels capable of completing this task independently of the project. Since the goal of the project is to build capacity, the project is most content whenever the local service providers take a lead role in the provision of technical assistance.

4. Provide Transition Services for Learners with Deafblindness.

4.1 Access and Use Existing Transition Procedure Guidelines from the Early Intervention Transition Team and the Colorado Systems Change Transition Grant Project.

4.1a Meet to review the early intervention guidelines, and make any necessary procedural changes. (Page 37)

The project staff have reviewed the existing guidelines in IDEA 97 and from the former Colorado Transition Project. No procedural changes were deemed to be necessary as long as the recommendations were tailored (as they are supposed to be for all children) to the child who is deafblind.

4.1b Send the early intervention guidelines to all Community Center Boards (infant/toddler programs) for their review and possible adoption. (Page 37)

The early childhood guidelines on transition written specifically for families of young children with deafblindness are now in practice with the two lead agencies for young children with sensory loss (Anchor Center for the Blind and Colorado Home Intervention Program). This information has not been mailed to Community Center Boards, as the more comprehensive transition guidelines of the Colorado Department of Education's Early Childhood Initiative have been disseminated to these programs. The latter guidelines should take precedence over the former ones.

4.1c Disseminate the guidelines of the Colorado Transition Project to families and service providers in an annual mailing and/or in the project newsletter. (Page 37)

Transition information has been included in the project newsletter. The Calendar of Events details the specific Colorado trainings for parents and service providers on the topic of transition. In addition, the newsletter notes new library materials which address transition.

The Program Coordinator completed a 1998 mailing to parents in Colorado who have a child with deafblindness between the ages of 14 and 21. The letter reviewed the need for a transition plan, key contact personnel, a Technical Assistance Request Form (which includes transition as a topic), and a release form to share information about the child with Maureen McGowan who is in the Denver regional office of Helen Keller National Center.

The packet was mailed to parents in November of 1998. This was an activity that was originally targeted for summer 1997, but it was delayed due to a change of staff of the Program Coordinator position.

4.2 Incorporate Personal Futures Planning into the Transition Planning Process

4.2a Receive training through CDE on the Colorado version of using Personal Futures Planning (called Individualized Planning Sessions) (page 38)

The project staff had an opportunity to learn the Personal Futures Planning Process in another capacity. Kathy McNulty from the National Technical Assistance Consortium (NTAC) came to Colorado for two separate days of trainings on this topic (February 21

and 22, 1997). Parents and professionals were invited to either session. Five parents and 12 professionals were in attendance. Both Tanni Anthony and Kathryn Daniels from the Colorado 307.11 Project participated in the training. Maureen McGowan (Helen Keller National Center), Steve Potter (Social Security Administration), J. Greeley (Anchor Center for Blind Children), Paula Hudson (Colorado Health Department), and Marilyn Carmichael (Colorado Rehabilitation Services) also participated in the trainings. These individuals are all members of the Colorado Deafblind Task Force. In addition, five teachers from Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind and area school districts attended the training.

As a result of the training, five persons associated with the Colorado 307.11 Project have specific skills to provide technical assistance on the topic of Personal Futures Planning. This includes the two project staff and three of the contract consultants associated with the project.

4.2b Actively "practice" this process with interested families on the census. (Page 38)

Following the February 1997 Personal Futures Planning training, the project has had two separate requests for follow-up technical assistance on the topic of Personal Futures Planning. Both requests came from persons who participated in the February workshop. Follow through assistance occurred between March and May 1997.

Following the workshop, an article was written on Personal Futures Planning by one of the parents who attended workshop. The article was published in the Spring 1997 edition of the project's newsletter. In addition, additional information was shared about the PFP process for persons not able to attend the workshop.

4.2c Implement the Individualized Planning Session information into the technical assistance of the project. (Page 38)

Personal Futures Planning is one the topics on the Colorado Technical Assistance Request Form that has been disseminated to parents and professionals throughout the State of Colorado.

4.3 Ensure Involvement of the Child, the Family, Sending and Receiving Service Providers, and Other Key People in the Child's Life in the Transition Planning.

4.3a Promote current transition procedures (through the Colorado Transition Grant Project) that specifically address the child and family's role in the transition process. (Page 38)

Information on transition has been included in the project's newsletters, such as materials from the lending library that addressed transition issues. In the Spring 1997 – Spring 1999 editions of *VIBRATIONS*, information was shared about the Next Step Workshops. These workshops were sponsored by the Colorado Department of Education. They were

open to families of children with disabilities of all ages, but specifically geared to families of older children.

In addition, there is a regular column on transition in the monthly "What's Happening Out There" newsletter which is mailed to service providers of children with visual impairments. This column includes new projects, transition resources, and scholarship information.

The Project Director was asked to be a member of a Task Force on Transition during fiscal year 1997. The group was comprised of representatives from the Colorado Center for the Blind, the Colorado Rehabilitation Services, the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, and several public school teachers. Its function was to address transition needs of youth with visual impairment, including deafblindness. The Task Force met four times during fiscal year 1997, but was disbanded at the beginning of September 1998. A brochure was developed on transition resources in Colorado for learners with visual impairments. This information has been shared with teachers of children with visual impairments.

4.3b Use the Colorado Individualized Planning Session process during transition meetings. (Page 38)

This process was not adopted, as the project uses the Personal Futures Planning process (which is actually a major part of the Colorado IPS).

5. Provide Opportunities For Parent Networking And Support

5.1 Provide Opportunities for Families to Be Together With One Another.

5.1a Provide a summer family retreat for families of identified children. (Page 39)

A Summer Family Retreat was held at the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) on June 7-9, 1996. The retreat was designed for families of children with deafblindness, deafness, and blindness. Over 20 families were in attendance. Of the families in attendance, four were families with children who were deafblind. Three families canceled just prior to the retreat.

The parent workshops included information and discussion regarding community support agencies, adult role models, communication strategies, technology, orientation and mobility, IEPs, and father and mother discussion groups. Parents were provided with opportunities to network with other families and their children during an outdoor barbecue, art activities, a family swim session, and through informal activities in the gym. Siblings and children with hearing and vision losses were provided opportunities to interact with each other in recreational and childcare settings while parents focused on the educational sessions provided for them.

The evaluation feedback was very positive with parents indicating that they learned a great deal during the weekend and were grateful for opportunities to get to know other families. One father stated that their family "benefited from the experience during the first few hours of the weekend when one of their typical children acknowledged that his younger sister may grow up to have special needs related to her ability to see and hear." Another aspect of high parent praise was the involvement of adult role models.

The Project Director attended an October 1996 training in Park City, Utah on the topic of parent involvement. This NTAC training covered ways to encourage families to attend a Family Retreat.

The 1997 and 1998 Summer Family Retreats did not occur as a result of the lack of project staff during this period. In the interim, family support was offered on a regional level. The Program Coordinator and contact consultant met with three families in the southwest corner of the state during a technical assistance site visit in October of 1997.

The Project Coordinator worked diligently to host a summer retreat in June of 1999. The Family Learning Seminar was held in Colorado Springs on June 4-6 with seven families of children with deafblindness in attendance. An additional family was registered, but was unable to attend. As previously, the Family Learning Seminar included families with children who are deaf, blind, and/or deafblind. To best meet the needs and interests of parents, three strands of topics were offered: deaf, blind, and deafblind. A few of these topics included "Challenging Behaviors," Recreational Activities for children with Deafblindness," "The Deaf Child's Bill of Rights," "Literacy and Communication Plans," and " Transition and Your Child.' Activities were provided for the children, including trips to the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, Santa's Workshop, and the Olympic Training Center.

A panel of individuals with three types of sensory disabilities received the most comments from parents, as families were excited to discover how their children might someday function as adults. The evaluation feedback was very positive in all areas, and each family expressed interest in attending a Family Learning Seminar in the future.

5.1b Sponsor regional family forum sessions based on particular topics of interest, using already scheduled parent forum meetings in local communities (page 39)

Information has been shared with parents on the newsletter mailing list as to a variety of trainings for parents. The three annual Parents Encouraging Parent Conferences were advertised, as were the "Next Step" trainings. Both these trainings were designed to address the following types of issues: (a) the grief process; (b) the IEP process; (c) parent rights; and (d) transition from school to adult services. These trainings were offered in regional sites throughout Colorado.

Information was mailed to parents in March 1997 on Colorado's PEAK Center. PEAK is a parent resource program in Colorado. In addition, information on PEAK was shared at

the 1998 State Conference on Visual Impairment during an evening vendor reception and at the 1999 Family Learning Seminar.

Members of three parent groups were invited to join the Vision Coalition in the spring of 1998. The three parent groups included Families of Blind Children, Parents Encouraging Parents, and PEAK Parent Center. A meeting was held on April 9, 1998 to discuss the goal of working with families on creating improved avenues of training, networking, and service support. While the focus was not directly on families of children with dual sensory impairment, these families will be included in the process. To date, the representative from Parents of Blind Children is still active in the Vision Coalition.

5.1c Encourage family to family networking by assisting with sharing of names (with permission) of families with one another. (Page 39)

The most opportune time for parent networking has been at past Family Summer Retreats. In the interim, parents who specifically request to meet other families are linked through the Project Director, contract consultants, and the two early childhood programs that receive technical assistance funding from the grant project. For example, the Anchor Center for the Blind offers parent meetings as a part of their program.

The project attempted to put together a Colorado Parent Network Booklet based on information that parents submitted back to the project from the March 1997 Parent Needs Survey mailing. Two families indicated an interest in this booklet. Instead of formulating a booklet, the project has queried parent interest in meeting other families in the newsletter.

5.1d Hire an English speaking parent and a Spanish speaking parent to "check in" with families on the census. (Page 39)

A Spanish speaking parent was identified during a 1996 Family Summer Retreat session. This parent, however, had extensive health problems and has not been available. Her child has since graduated from high school. Another Spanish speaking parent has not been identified. Two English speaking parents are currently on contract to check in with families on the census.

5.1e Promote the activities of the Families of Colorado's Deafblind in advertisement and with available financial assistance. (Page 39)

The Families of Colorado's Deafblind organization was discontinued in 1997 due to lack of involvement. The two parents that took the leadership role became too busy with work and home lives. This remains an area of concern for the project staff - - how to best support families who are truly overwhelmed with the day to day responsibilities of their lives.

One wonderful possibility for parent involvement and support activities is that Yvette Tanner, a parent in southwest Colorado, has been appointed to the National Family

Association for the Deafblind. Ms. Tanner is highly motivated to increase parent to parent contact and family support activities. She and another parent (Shannon Cannizzaro) have been hired to assist with family related activities.

5.1f Promote the activities of state parent groups such as PEAK (Parents Education and Assistance to Kids) organization to families of children with deafblindness. (Page 39)

A Calendar of Events has been included in the project's three annual newsletters that have been mailed out between March 1997 and March 1999. The calendar listed activities of relevance to families, including those sponsored by state parent organizations such as PEAK. In addition, specific information about PEAK was mailed in March 1997 to the families on the Colorado Deafblind Census.

5.2 Provide Support to Families So That They Can Participate In Activities.

5.2a Provide financial stipend support to parents who contribute to project activities (e.g., planning the Family Retreat) (page 40)

Five families participated in the February 21-22, 1997 training on Personal Futures Planning. This training offered a wonderful platform for sharing, networking, and building relationships.

Three Colorado families attended the National Conference on Deafblindness that was held in Washington, DC in June of 1997. Funding was sponsored through a combination of project and NTAC funds.

One parent was provided with transportation assistance to attend the 1997 -99 Summer Institutes on Deafblindness (lodging and meals were provided to all participants).

Two Colorado parents attended the conference "Important Practices in Communication: Making it Happen at Home and in the Community" on August 12-14, 1999. The conference was held in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Project Coordinator also attended the conference. One parent was sponsored by the project and one was sponsored by the combined efforts of NTAC and NFADB. These two parents are currently on contract with the project to contact other parents. One parent wrote an article for the project's newsletter about her positive experience at the conference.

5.2b Assist with lodging, meals, and transportation support to families participating in project activities away from their home community. (Page 40)

Parents attending the 1996 Family Summer Retreat were given a stipend for mileage. Their accommodations and meals were provided on-site. In addition, childcare was provided at the retreat.

Families interested in attending the April 18-20, 1997 Mountain Visions Conference had the option of applying (and automatically receiving) stipend assistance for transportation, lodging, and meals. Two families attended the conference and received stipend support.

Parents who participated in the February 1997 training on Personal Futures Planning received stipend support for transportation, accommodations, and childcare.

One family was subsidized to attend the June 1997 National Conference on Deafblindness. This family will be involved in a panel presentation at the conference.

Families interested in attending the October 1997 Conference on Visual Impairment had the option of applying (and automatically receiving) stipend assistance for registration, transportation, lodging, and meals. Three families attended the conference and received stipend support.

Families attending the 1999 Family Learning Seminar were provided hotel lodging. The hotel was able to accommodate families with children who needed wheel chair access rooms. Meals and childcare were included on the campus of the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. A stipend was given for mileage.

5.2c *Assist families by providing or with helping obtain respite services for their child(ren) so that they can participate in grant activities.* (Page 40)

Parents attending the 1996 and 1999 Family Summer Retreat were provided childcare on-site. Home respite was offered, but not utilized by the families in attendance.

Two families requested and received funding for childcare support so they could participate in the February 1997 training on Personal Futures Planning.

5.2d *Provide interpreters in the family's native language and/or in sign language during project activities.* (Page 40)

Arrangements were made to have an interpreter on-site at the 1996 and 1999 Summer Family Retreats. As needed, there have been Spanish interpreters at past Family Retreats. These services were arranged as the need was identified in the registration process.

A sign language interpreter was provided at the Colorado Deafblind Task Force meetings for two of its members.

The project employed a Spanish interpreter to translate student reports, the Parent Need Survey, and project's FACT Sheets.

5.2e *Disseminate information about project activities in the media most comfortable to the families of identified children.* (Page 40)

The project newsletter was used as a primary vehicle of information dissemination. There are three newsletters per fiscal year (Fall, Winter, and Spring). The only requested media format for the newsletter has been print. The newsletter was only printed in English. None of the returned 1999 Parent Surveys identified the need for the newsletter to be offered in another language.

5.3 Promote the Use of Parent-Professional Partnership Practices among Service Providers and Agencies.

5.3a Encourage staff, families, and service providers to attend a Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conference where parent rights are reviewed, and parent and professional partnership information is modeled and shared. (Page 41)

Information was shared about the PEP Conferences in the Spring 1997 – Spring 1999 newsletters. In addition, this information was posted in the monthly *What's Happening Out There* newsletter that is mailed to services providers of children with visual impairments (including deafblindness).

5.3b Embed and model family-centered and parent and professional partnership principles into technical assistance activities (training and consultation). (Page 41)

Parent-professional relationships were encouraged at all levels of technical assistance activities.

5.4 Support Families in Accessing Necessary Resources, Support Services and Agencies.

5.4a Disseminate resource information in project newsletter and in target mailings to families and service providers who have direct contact with families. (Page 41)

Resource information was listed in the Spring 1997 – Spring 1999 newsletters. Resources advertised in these newsletters included: the Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness Project, D-B Link, National Technical Assistance Consortium, Helen Keller National Center, National Family Association for the Deafblind, National Coalition on Deafblindness, and the American Association of the Deafblind.

5.4b Provide technical assistance to families on ways to access resource and support assistance. (Page 41)

The Technical Assistance Request Form was included in the Spring 1997 – Spring 1999 project newsletters. The project staff directed parents and service providers to appropriate resources during phone conversations and on-site technical assistance requests.

A letter was mailed to parents in early Fall of 1997-99 explaining the project and offering technical assistance support. The Technical Assistance Form accompanied the letter.

6. **Maintain And Utilize Input From An Advisory Committee (The Colorado Task Force On Deafblindness) To Plan, Develop, And Implement Services.**

6.1 Meet With The Deafblind Task Force On A Regular Basis For Purposes Of Statewide Planning, Development, And Implementation Of Services.

6.1a Schedule monthly to bi-monthly meetings of the Colorado Task Force on Deafblindness (page 42)

The Colorado Deafblind Task Force met on a regular basis during the four-year grant cycle. The meetings were held in a variety of sites to allow some of the members to have a chance to host the meeting in his or her office building. As such, meetings were held at the Anchor Center for Blind Children, Colorado Center for the Blind, Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Colorado Rehabilitation Center, and the Division of Developmental Disabilities.

6.1b Invite new membership through announcements of meetings and activities of the Colorado Task Force on Deafblindness in the project newsletter. (Page 42)

The membership has remained remarkably the same over the course of the four-year grant cycle with some replacement members. Membership includes Julie Deden (Colorado Center for the Blind); Tanni Anthony and Sheryl Ayres (Colorado Department of Education); Paula Hudson (Colorado Department of Health); J. C. Greeley and Alice Applebaum (Anchor Center for Blind Children); Marilyn Carmichael (Colorado Rehabilitation Services); Susan Sutherland (Margaret Walters School); Barbara Meese (Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind); Steve Potter (Social Security Administration); Joe Schippaccasse (Department of Developmental Disabilities); Maureen McGowan (Helen Keller National Center); Marie Lopez (parent); Yvette Tanner (parent); Kevin Anderson (consumer); and Heidi Sherrie (consumer). Paddi Davies, the project's NTAC contact person, has attended several meetings over the course of the grant cycle.

6.1c Incorporate input from The Colorado Deafblind Task Force into the project activities. (Page 42)

The current project of the Task Force is to assist with the planning and implementation of the Usher Syndrome Screening project. The Task Force members were involved in a daylong meeting with Dr. Sandra Davenport on November 13, 1997. The meeting that was held the day before the workshop by Dr. Davenport was designed to be an information sharing and planning session. Dr. Davenport returned to Colorado, courtesy of NTAC funding, in August of 1999 to assist further will the project.

The Task Force was kept apprised on the project's activities and offered ongoing input into these events.

IV. SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AND CHANGES

There were several staff changes since the inception of this grant cycle. Kathryn Daniels, who had been hired in November 1996, resigned her position in June 1997. While her tenure was short, Kathryn greatly assisted with technical assistance activities. The Project Director continued the activities of the grant on a solo basis from June to late September 1997. This presented great challenges with the completion of some of the project's activities, especially the Summer Family Retreat.

Jacki Daniels was hired in early October 1997. Jacki accomplished many things in the time that she was with the project. She was actively involved in child specific consultations, inservice training, coordination of the Colorado Deafblind Task Force meetings, finalization of the project's FACT Sheets, and organization of the project's library. Due to a family situation, Jacki relocated back to Arizona in the spring of 1998. The position of Program Coordinator was vacant until September of 1998 when Sheryl Ayres was hired. Sheryl hit the ground running and has contributed greatly to actively completing the technical assistance activities, coordinating the project's lending library, and taking the lead role in organizing the Summer Family Retreat. Due to Sheryl's efforts, the Family Retreats were reinstated in June of 1999.

Lynn Crenshaw was the support staff person for the project from November 1996 to November 1997, when she was transferred to a new position within the Colorado Department of Education. Peggy Vermilyea came on board at that time. Kim Samuels replaced Peggy in November of 1998.

V. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE, AND RESEARCH

As the project continued over the four-year cycle, it became apparent that it provided a unique role in Colorado. The Colorado Services to Children with Deafblindness project is the only source of technical assistance for students who are deafblind. Technical assistance requests became more plentiful throughout the four years and there was evidence that once a parent or service provider made a TA request, they were likely to make additional future requests.

Although parent activities were few and far between, this is an area of gained momentum for the project. Two parents have been hired for future grant activities. Parents of children with deafblindness continually request support activities specific to their children. Time and time again, parents want professionals who understand sensory disability. They are less interested in "generic models" of support. In fact, two parents went on record with the Project Director that they do not seek the assistance of state-level parent clearinghouse groups because they do not feel that their needs are met. One parent noted that her concerns for an individualized program for her child (as a child with deafblindness) were not supported. There appears to be a growing number of agencies who believe in a "one size fits all" model of educational intervention. This may not always be the best model for children who have very specific learning needs. There is a time for global instruction, but not at the expense of a child's individualized learning.

More attention should be given to parent specific activities. The project is constantly seeking new ways to involve parents. This is a challenge due to fiscal constraints of the budget. It is important to fund parents for their contributing efforts.

Deafblindness is a unique disability. It does require professionals who have specialized training. The Colorado project worked diligently to train new personnel across the state over the four-year grant cycle. Currently there are over 20 well-trained individuals in the state. Fifty to sixty more have received some level of training over the course of the four years. There is, of course, more work to be done, but the grant cycle brought increased service provider skill.

Thanks to the efforts of the National Technical Assistance Consortium, additional technical assistance activities have been funded. This project and the DB-Link Project have been invaluable for their collaborative assistance and support. It is hoped that they will receive ongoing funding for their national roles in provide TA and resources to parents, service providers, and the staff of the 307.11 projects.